

The Builder.

No. CCLXXXIII.

SATURDAY, JULY 8, 1848.



PEW days ago we were called to Edinburgh to give evidence professionally on a matter of construction, which will not be uninteresting to some of our readers. The journey, in our days, is nothing. You take a seat in the express train from the Euston-square station at nine o'clock in the morning, and by half-past nine at night—twelve hours and a half, mind—you have left nearly 420 miles behind you, and are in the capital of Scotland.*

Nor need the day be lost: it offers, especially, a good opportunity to get through a tough book which you desire to read, and yet, with others on the table at home for choice, have delayed attacking. There are many nice stations on the way, from which hints may be gained; and though much of the road is uninteresting, there are parts which are particularly beautiful—as, for example, soon after passing Wigan (where the restoration of the old church, some time since mentioned by us, appears to be making rapid progress), through Lancaster, Kendal, and Windermere, to Carlisle.

At this latter place,—the cathedral of which most of our readers know, if only through Mr. Billings' interesting work illustrative of it,—the station is well deserving of examination. It is Gothic in style. The first-class refreshment room has an open wood roof of considerable size, and other striking features. Mr. Tite, whose hands must be pretty well tied up with lines, is the architect, and has similar jurisdiction as far as Aberdeen. In Edinburgh the permanent station, not yet completed, will be of considerable extent, and, apparently, of good character.

One striking, though natural, result of the close connection given to heretofore widely separated localities by the railway system, is the disappearance of local peculiarities. Drees, manners, thoughts, are becoming everywhere the same: the shop-windows display the same prints, music, and books, as you have left in London, and the same matter affords subjects for conversation here as there. Local prejudices and narrownesses will follow. Probably the only peculiarity which would be observable by a stranger during a long walk, is the occasional occurrence of a notice-board, marked, "This land to fee,"—in another word, to let; but with this difference from our lettings of land for building, that it is granted in perpetuity,—the "fee duty" being so long paid.

Those of our readers who have not seen "the modern Athens," should take an early opportunity of doing so. They have all heard

* The arrangements on the London and North-Western line are generally good; but we owe it to the public to note that the confusion on the platform at Euston-square station, on the occasion of the departure of the special train which on this occasion carried us, excited with the want of attention to the passengers and their luggage, was very discreditably and without any justifying circumstances. We saw our port-manteau on a porter's barrow fifteen minutes before the train started, and yet were compelled to leave without it,—the only reply to our repeated statement that it had not been brought up, being the cool and not over-courteous remark—"We can't help it; if you don't get in, we shall go without you." It is true that the guard obligingly dropped a note at the first station, and that the trunk was forwarded by the next train, but this will in no degree excuse the confusion and dissatisfaction at starting. We hope this statement may lead those who have the power to make an improvement in this respect.

of the contrast afforded by the old and new town,—the Edinburgh of romance and the Edinburgh of the last five-and-twenty years,—they know of Calton-hill and its monuments; the castle on the rock, high above the town; Arthur's seat and the Salisbury crags; the Scott memorial, work of poor Kemp; and houses ten stories high. They will probably expect to see finer buildings than are to be found there, though there are many of very great merit, but as respects the appearance presented by the city generally, the ever varying combination it presents, the splendid views afforded by the heights around it, their imagination is not likely to carry them beyond the reality.

Most carefully should the citizens preserve the natural beauties of their locality,—keeping a watchful eye both on their own town council and the Woods and Forests. The necessity for such watchfulness was shewn not long ago, when the destruction of Salisbury crags was commenced, to provide metal for road-making! Let them take care that no smug, prim villas creep up Calton-hill,—no awkward squad of settlers effect a location on Arthur's seat, slinging, though with very different meaning, from the old song which Scott so loved,—

"Now, Arthur's seat shall be my bed;
The streets shall ne'er be 'fyled by me."

Even the Queen's drive, Victoria road, which has been formed at an immense expense, all round the latter, and affords such a ride as can no where else be obtained, is an approach to the trimming and subjugation of this noble hill, and barely escapes our lament instead of extorting our admiration. The variety of view here is quite unrivalled. Looking from one point we have the piled up city, old and new,—man and man's work. A few steps onwards, and in the place of this we get a perfectly rural scene, with far extending fields, the village of Duddingston and its quiet church. Again, but a little further, and the whole is entirely changed; the Firth of Forth spreads far out before us, and, skirting it, is seen the sea-port Leith and its pier.

Holyrood, famous in story, and which is close to the Queen's drive on the city side, displays, in the chapel attached to the palace, one of the few remnants of antiquity left in Edinburgh, and is a very interesting example of early English (early Scotch?) architecture. The advice of Knox "destroy the nest, and the crows will fly away," appears to have been fully and fatally carried out; nor is the preservative spirit yet recovered,* spite of Scott's malison on those who destroyed the City cross in 1756:—

"Dun Edin's cross a pillar'd stone
Rose on a turret octagon;
But now is razed that monument,
Whence Royal edicts rang.

O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head."

Another remnant of ancient Scotland, and one of the best specimens of Gothic architecture in Edinburgh is on the borders of destruction. The ancient collegiate church of Edinburgh (Trinity) has been purchased by the North British Railway Company for a wagon shed! The Scottish antiquaries made some show of fight, we believe, but resistance appears to have been unavailing.†

* Relative to Knox's own monument, we learn that the funds placed at the disposal of the Committee for raising this amounting to about 2,000*l.*, have enabled them to secure all the property at Knox's Corner, in the Canongate, which is required for their purposes, including the ancient domicile of the Reformer.

† This church was founded by Mary of Guelders, wife of King James II., in 1488. The remains of the foundation, which were interred there, have been removed to the abbey of Holyrood. A cut of the north side of the church was

Moray House, in the Canongate, of which we gave a small wood-cut,* sometime since, with its curious balcony, and stone spires on the gateway, is being repaired. There is much that is curious about this house, especially two domed and panelled ceilings,† and the terraced garden, with fountains and other decorations, at the back. The house was built in the early part of the 17th century, was once Cromwell's head-quarters, and afterwards the scene of important proceedings connected with the treaty of union with England.

The old Parliament House is a work of about the same period as the singular little structure last named, and deserves a visit, on many accounts. It is of considerable size, and has an open wooden roof, the expiring reflect of the beautiful roofs of the 15th and 16th centuries. As one of the last of a series, this roof is exceedingly interesting to the architectural inquirer.

In this noble apartment there are several good pieces of sculpture by Chantrey and others: we must specially mention a monument to Duncan Forbes, by Roubilliac—a splendid work, and one of the finest of the artist's productions,—his grace, elegance, and fine drawing, being displayed without the flutter and affectation which disfigure many of his figures. There appear to be few sculptors resident at this time in Edinburgh. Mr. Steele has nearly finished his statue of the Duke of Wellington, which is to stand opposite the Registry-office, and will add more to the sculptor's reputation than his sitting figure of her Majesty on the top of the Royal Institution, which, although well-intentioned (the pyramidal form is aimed at), is little less than a failure.

Mr. Ritchie, who has done much for the architecture of Edinburgh, is about a group of children for the doorway of the new Western Bank, which is nearly finished externally, and will be referred to again when we continue our notes next week. He has also two of the "Barons" for the House of Lords to execute, and has shewn reasons to the commissioners why they should permit him to vary the uniformity of armour, by dressing one of the statues in senatorial robes. Ritchie was a pupil of Thorwaldson, and, like all who knew that great man, speaks of him with affectionate reverence.

ARCHITECTURE AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unquestionable decline in the influence of art in that one of its fields of development with which it is our more especial duty to concern ourselves,—notwithstanding that that most apathetic body of professors, the architectural, mailed in indifference to the welfare of their own order, as to their capability of doing public good, are content to rhapsodize on art, and lament their inability to exercise it, rather than to advance and popularise it; notwithstanding that the whole world has been ransacked, in the search for fragments of all forms and ages, whilst the question of beauty has been little concerned in the search, and the question of ART—considered as the engine of the production of beauty and delight—never; notwithstanding that, and in the history of architecture for the first time in an accurate manner, ancient models have been delineated, without the true value of ancient models being felt—phases of the general false position of architecture, of which we have at different times spoken, and which "come tardy off" in these degenerate days, leave "the mission

given in THE BUILDER a short time since—see p. 116, ante. Illustrations of the church will be found in "The Historical and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland," by H. W. Billings and W. Burn.

* P. 116, ante.

† One of these is engraved in "The Barons' Antiquities."